

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

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INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMCONSUL IBADAN

AMCONSUL KADUNA

USUN NEW YORK 2533

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PGOV, NI

SUBJECT: CHIEF ANI'S COMMENTS ON RETURN TO CIVILIAN RULE SCHEDULE

REF: LAGOS 10206

1. FEDERAL ELECTORAL COMMISSION (FEDECO) HEAD CHIEF
MICHAEL ANI MET WITH CONGRESSMAN FOWLER AND EMBASSY
OFFICER ON SEPTEMBER 1 TO DISCUSS CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY
ELECTIONS (REPORTED REFTEL) AND FUTURE STEPS ON
SCHEDULE FOR RETURN OF CIVILIAN RULE. ANI WAS WELL
PLEASED BY ELECTION RESULTS AND PARTICULARLY BY SMOOTH
MANNER IN WHICH ELECTION HAD TAKEN PLACE. HE CONCENTRATED
DISCUSSION ON FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS AND COMMENTED ON
FOLLOWING TOPICS:

-- ELECTORAL ROLLS. ANI SAID THAT GENERAL
NATIONWIDE REGISTRATION OF VOTERS WILL BEGIN ON DECEMBER 3
AND WILL TAKE ABOUT TWO MONTHS. FEDECO IS NOW WORKING
ON BOUNDARIES FOR ELECTORAL DISTRICTS WHICH WILL BE BASED
ON 1963 CENSUS. QUALIFICATIONS TO VOTE WILL BE 18 YEARS OF
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AGE AND NO FELONY CONVICTION. ANI WANTS COMPLETE REGISTRATION
OF VOTERS BEFORE POLITICAL PARTIES BEGIN OPERATION IN
1978. THIS VOTER REGISTER WOULD THEN BE REVISED IN
COOPERATION WITH PARTIES. (ANI DID NOT CLARIFY WHAT THIS
MEANT.) IN 1979, A FINAL REGISTER WILL BE PRODUCED
BASED ON RESIDENCE COUPLED WITH PLACE OF WORK. PEOPLE
FROM CROSS RIVERS STATE, FOR EXAMPLE, WHO LIVE AND WORK

IN LAGOS WILL VOTE IN LAGOS.

-- PRESIDENTIAL MODEL IN DRAFT CONSTITUTION.

ASKED ABOUT POSSIBLE CONTROVERSY IN CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY OVER ADOPTION OF PRESIDENTIAL MODEL, ANI WAS GENERALLY NONCOMMITTAL SAYING HE HAD READ SUCH RUMORS IN THE PRESS. HE ADDED, HOWEVER, THAT HE EXPECTED CONSTITUTION TO BE ADOPTED BY ASSEMBLY PRETTY MUCH AS NOW WRITTEN.

-- POSSIBILITY OF REFERENDUM ON CONSTITUTION. ANI WAS ALSO NONCOMMITTAL ABOUT POSSIBILITY OF REFERENDUM IF ASSEMBLY DEADLOCKS. BUT, HE ADDED, AWARENESS OF POSSIBILITY MAY HASTEN THEIR WORK.

-- DISQUALIFICATION OF CANDIDATES. ANI LAMENTED HIS "MOST UNENVIABLE ROLE." HE SAID THAT THEORETICALLY CANDIDATES NEED BE DISQUALIFIED ONLY FOR ASSEMBLY CONTEST BECAUSE IT INVOLVES PREPARATION OF FUNDAMENTAL LAW OF LAND. HOWEVER, HE FELT THERE WAS 75 PERCENT CHANCE THAT DISQUALIFICATION PROCEDURE WOULD CONTINUE ON SAME BASIS ALL THE WAY DOWN THE ROAD TO OCTOBER 1979 AND PERHAPS BEYOND. FYI: ANI'S CONFIDENCE THAT THE DISQUALIFICATION PROCESS WILL CONTINUE IN FUTURE MAY BE REFLECTED IN AN AUGUST 31 FMG DECREE WHICH REAFFIRMS THAT ANYONE WHO PAYS INCOME TAX IN ONE LUMP SUM TO COVER MORE THAN ONE YEAR'S TAX LIABILITY SHALL NOT BE ELIGIBLE FOR ELECTION TO THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY. END FYI.

2. COMMENT: ANI'S MOOD WAS UPBEAT, EVEN EBULLIENT. HE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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SAID THE MOVEMENT TOWARD CIVILIAN RULE WAS ON COURSE AND ON SCHEDULE AND HE SAW NO REASON FOR ANY ALTERATION, PARTICULARLY ANY SLOWDOWN.
WYMAN

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NNN

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